

**SITE INSPECTION REPORT FOR PROPOSED ROADS
NAURADEHI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY & KANHA TIGER RESERVE
9TH-14TH APRIL 2013**



A site inspection report on roads in and around Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary and Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh submitted to the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife

Ms Prerna Singh Bindra
Member, Standing Committee, National Board for Wildlife

Mr Sanjay Pathak
Assistant Inspector General of Forests, National Tiger Conservation Authority

Dr M D Madhusudan
Nature Conservation Foundation, Member, Standing Committee, National Board for Wildlife

BACKGROUND

Madhya Pradesh Forest Department had tabled a proposal seeking clearance for a set of rural roads to be constructed in and around two protected areas, Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary and Kanha Tiger Reserve. This was first discussed in the 25th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife held on 13th June 2012.

Minutes of this meeting are reproduced below:

Item 5.2 to 5.14:

- 5.2 Construction and Upgradation of 2.5 km. road from Khatola to Kisli, M.P.
- 5.3 Construction and Upgradation of 2.6 km Road from 14 km off T-2 to Mukki, M.P.
- 5.4 Construction and Upgradation of 5.13 km Road from Rajomal to Manoharpur, M.P.
- 5.5 Construction of Stop dam cum Causeway on Rehti-Tendukheda Road at Km 82/2, M.P.
- 5.6 Construction and Upgradation of 6 km Tendukheda- Taradehi- Sarra to Kudpura Approach Road, M.P.
- 5.7 Approach road from Somkheda to Hinouti-Ramgarh, M.P.
- 5.8 Construction and Upgradation of 4.20 km of Bamhori to Kotkheda Road, M.P.
- 5.9 Construction of MDR to Mokla Road, M.P.
- 5.10 Construction of 14.20 km road for NH-12, 7 km. to Malkuhi Jhilpani Dhana, M.P.
- 5.11 Construction of 4.73 km Somkheda-Suhela Approach Road, M.P.

- 5.12 Upgradation of 8.55 km road from Bineka to Borpani, M.P.
- 5.13 Widening of State Highway 59 from Indore to Gujrat Border, M.P.
- 5.14 Upgradation of Bhiapur to Amchhekala Dam Road, M.P.

The Member Secretary informed the Committee that as per the decision of the Standing Committee of NBWL, the State Government had submitted the status of each of the said roads the details of which had also been circulated among the members.

Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda reminded the Standing Committee that earlier it had taken a decision that existing roads in National Parks and Sanctuaries would only be allowed to be repaired, and certainly not permitted to be broadened or converted to hard top roads. He emphasized that this should be kept in mind before taking decisions.

Ms. Perna Bindra informed that as earlier communicated by mail, by non-official members in a letter dated October 19, 2011 that 'in principle approval' was not accorded, according to their understanding. Instead, information was sought on maps, kind of work for which permission was required, and besides, it was decided that no gravel road in PAs would be converted to black-topped roads, though existing roads could be repaired as long as these remain in the same original form, i.e., with no widening, new construction or diversion of forest land.

Shri Kishore Rithe suggested that site specific reports may be obtained with respect to each of the said roads as was done earlier in case of the proposal for 12 roads involving Bagdara Sanctuary.

The Committee after discussion, decided to carry out a site inspection by Ms. Perna Bindra, Dr Madhusudan, NCF, Mysore, and one representative from the National Tiger Conservation Authority to enable it to take a view in the matter.

Subsequently, following a further discussion of this in the 28th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife held on 20th March 2013, the visit of the site inspection team was communicated to the Chief Wildlife Warden, Madhya Pradesh on 28th March 2013.

The team inspected seven roads in and around Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary (Nos. 5.5 to 5.11 in the list above) between 9th and 11th April 2013, and three roads in and around Kanha Tiger Reserve (Nos. 5.2 to 5.4 in the list above) on 12-13th April 2013. On our inspections at Nauradehi WLS, we were accompanied by Shri Ajit Srivastava, CCF, Sagar and Shri Deva Prasad, DFO, Nauradehi WLS. In addition, we met from the MP Rural Roads Development Authority Executive Engineer PK Sharma, Asst Manager JP Sharma, Sub-engineer, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna RP Dehariy and others, who accompanied us on our inspections of Road Nos. 5.6 and 5.8. No officials from the user agency accompanied us on other visits, although, according to the officials of the MP Forest Department, they were informed of the site inspection. On our inspections in Kanha Tiger Reserve, we were accompanied by Shri OP Tiwari, Deputy Director, Kanha Tiger Reserve, PK Verma, Asstt Director, Phen

WLS and in charge of Supkhar range, Shri Rajnish K Singh ACF, Shri SK Sinha Range Forest Officer, Kisli, Uttam Shastia, Range forest Officer, Mukki Range and Shri Rakesh Shukla, Research Officer.

We would like to thank the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, the Nauradehi management and staff and the Kanha management and staff for their kind hospitality and for sharing their information and knowledge; and also for their effort to protect these forests and wildlife.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General observations

Field visits and mapping of the location of proposed roads showed that they fell into two clear categories. In the first category were stretches of roads that were proposed on forest land located entirely within a protected area, and in the second, stretches of roads that were proposed on revenue land located outside the protected area boundary, but within the Supreme Court mandated Eco-sensitive Zone (and in the case of Kanha Tiger Reserve, also located within the Tiger Reserve Buffer) where a clearance from the SC-NBWL is still necessary.

We would stress here the need for clear communication of information from the states regarding the proposals with all details viz. including what exactly is proposed or the nature of activity, the amount of forest land proposed to be used/ diverted if any, clear maps of the proposed activity, with their GPS coordinates and maps of the concerned PA.

Delayed and lack in clarity of information has caused much confusion in the case of some of the proposed roads, and impaired decision making.

General recommendations:

In accordance with decisions made in the 27th Meeting of the SC-NBWL and also in earlier meetings, **for all stretches of proposed roads passing within the boundary of a PA, we recommend that no upgradation either in terms of widening or change of road surface (for example, from murrum or WBM to black-top or cement-concrete) be permitted.** However, we recommend that repair and maintenance of the road in its current status be permitted. We further recommend that the user agency intimate the concerned competent authority (of the forest department) in writing about the nature and extent of proposed repair or maintenance, and obtain his/her written permission before commencing work. The competent authority may only permit repair/maintenance only for the roads listed above. For roads within the PA/Core Critical Tiger habitat, any repair/maintenance should be done by the concerned forest authorities. We also discussed this issue—of permitting maintenance without permitting upgradation within PAs—not only with MP Forest Department officials, but also the officials of the MPRRDA, and local people, and our reasoning seemed acceptable to them.

Outside the boundaries of PAs, we have largely allowed for upgradation, as per the proposals:

Over and above this, we recommend the following additional points:

1. Where roads fall within PAs or inside reserve forests, all repair/maintenance of roads may be carried out without diverting forest land from the MP FD to the user agency, but by only providing right of way to the user agency. The status of land will not change.
2. All the material required for maintenance and repair, including moorum, metal, soil etc. and fuel for heating the tar, would be brought from outside of the Sanctuary. No "borrow pits" for metal, moorum or soil would be permitted in the Sanctuary/Tiger Reserve. No labour camps be permitted within PAs during construction, or even in close vicinity, no work after daylight hours will be permitted. Labour will not enter the PA entering the sanctuary for fuelwood or such other purpose, or leave garbage or litter, for which there should be proper disposal.
3. Labour and staff involved in the projects cannot be permitted to draw water from the sanctuary for any purpose. Water for repairs etc will *not* be drawn from the sanctuary.
4. The officer-in-charge of the Sanctuary may prescribe a speed limit of vehicles passing on the roads traversing the Sanctuary and require the installation of speed breakers at the cost of the user agency.
5. The Sanctuary authorities should establish manned *chowkies* at the exit and entry points of both these roads and extra vigilance will have to be exercised at night, especially in view of the fact that illicit extraction of timber was noticed especially in Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary.
6. We request that special attention be given to wildlife corridors, and areas known to be used for wildlife as passage, especially in the maintenance/upgradation areas outside PAs, and adequate mitigation measures be taken to address this so as to cause minimal impact to wildlife

SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Below, we provide observations for each road proposed (See Figures 1 & 2), and

5.2 Construction and Upgradation of 2.5 km. road from Khatola to Kisli, M.P.

- We note that the road surface has already been cemented up to the Kanha TR entry gate, which should strictly have been done only after obtaining clearance from the SC-NBWL. We hope the MP Government will ensure that such violations do not take place in future.
- We note that the area within which the road upgradation is proposed is not of significant length and there is reasonably good access to the main roads. The main entrance to the park is also closeby. It is currently a murrum road that is not maintained. The land falls within the Kanha National Park boundary but is not Core Critical Tiger Habitat. It was concluded-after discussion with the concerned authorities and the villagers that the road in its current form did not constraint access or represent much hardship in its current form. We

therefore recommend that the road remains in its present state (and not be widened/upgraded), and be repaired/maintained in its present form, subject to the general conditions mentioned above. Being within the National Park, it is important that the responsibility of the maintenance of this road be with the KTR authorities, and that that they maintain this in its current form on a routine basis.

5.3 Construction and Upgradation of 2.6 km Road from 14 km off T-2 to Mukki, M.P.

- The conditions governing this road are exactly as has been described under 5.2 above, where land on which the proposed road is located falls within the Kanha National Park boundary, but out of the Core Critical Tiger Habitat. The condition of the road was good and was being used regularly by vehicles including those of the private resorts located near here. **We recommend that the road remains in its present state (and not be widened/upgraded) and be repaired/maintained in its present form subject to the general conditions mentioned above. Being within the National Park it is important that the responsibility of the maintenance of this road be with the KTR authorities,** and that that they maintain this in its current form on a routine basis

5.4 Construction and Upgradation of 5.13 km Road from Rajomal to Manoharpur, M.P.

We understand that this road passes through Kanha National Park (but not within the Tiger Reserve's CTH), but also includes some area outside the National Park but within the TR buffer. For the stretch passing through Kanha National Park, **we recommend that the entire road remains in its present state, and be repaired/maintained in its present form (and not be widened/upgraded) subject to the general conditions mentioned above.** The responsibility of the maintenance of this road within the National Park should be with the KTR authorities.

NAURADEHI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

5.5 Construction of Stop dam cum Causeway on Rehti-Tendukheda Road at Km 82/2, M.P.

- After inspection of this location, **we recommend that the causeway construction be permitted, but again, by only permitting the use of forest land** (for construction and maintenance) by the PWD (the user agency), without diverting the land itself to the PWD (the status of the land should remain the same) and keeping with other general conditions mentioned above.

5.6 Construction and Upgradation of 6 km Tendukheda- Taradehi- Sarra to Kudpura Approach Road, M.P.

As per records available to us, and field visits, the entire stretch of this road falls outside the PA except for a stretch of 400m. We recommend that except for this stretch, which **may only be repaired in its current form with no upgradation,** the rest of the road can be upgraded with the general conditions specified above.

5.7 Approach road from Somkheda to Hinouti-Ramgarh, M.P.

There is confusion regarding this road. There are discrepancies in length mentioned in the MP government submission to the SC, NBWL and the length mentioned by the concerned DCF, Nauradehi, and based on map/field observations.

In view of this we recommend that the **road falling within in the PA remains in its present state, with no upgradation, but all permissions needed for repair/maintenance may be accorded by the local officials**, subject to the general conditions mentioned above.

We again stress the need for clarity of information.

5.8 Construction and Upgradation of 4.20 km of Bamhori to Kotkheda Road, M.P.

As per records available to us, and field visits, the entire stretch of this road falls outside the PA, but within the ESZ. We recommend that the road be upgraded and repaired, but not widened with the general conditions specified above

5.9 Construction of MDR to Mokla Road, M.P.

- We noted during our field inspection that the black topping has been completed on either side of the stretch that passes through Nauradehi WLS, though permission for the same has not been sought/taken from SC, NBWL. The stretch within Nauradehi is in a poor state. We therefore recommend that **this stretch be repaired, but no upgrading (to blacktop) be allowed.**

5.10 Construction of 14.20 km road for NH-12, 7 km. to Malkuhi Jhilpani Dhana, M.P.

- We note from our field inspection that the entire stretch of the road proposed for upgradation passes through the heart of the sanctuary having excellent forests with considerable wildlife presence and activity. In our brief drive, we saw chital, sambar, jackal and langur. The road is also very well-maintained and can be used even during the monsoon, except in case of very heavy rains. Fire is a major hazard in this sanctuary. However, this year we were informed that fire incidents were minimal due to extra efforts on the part of the FD and additional deployment of forest watchers. Opening up this road would only increase risk of forest fires, as well as open access for timber smuggling etc. **We recommend, therefore, that this stretch of road be repaired and maintained in its current status, and no black topping or any other form of upgradation or widening be permitted.**

We also had a meeting with the villages of Malkuhi. They said that they had no problem of connectivity on this road even during the monsoon, but pleaded for basic facilities such as water in the summer rather than a road. They also expressed a keenness for relocation outside the PA as they did not have access to basic facilities, employment opportunity, education. Given the location and value of this stretch of forest, and the widespread evidence of tree-girdling and timber smuggling, we recommend that *chowkies* be installed at the junction of this road with NH-12, and other sensitive points as per requirement.

5.11 Construction of 4.73 km Somkheda-Suhela Approach Road, M.P.

There is confusion regarding this road. There are discrepancies in length mentioned in the MP government submission to the SC, NBWL and the length mentioned by the concerned DCF, Nauradehi or based on map/field observations. In view of this we recommend that the stretch of the road falling within in the PA remains in its present state, with no upgradation, subject to the general conditions mentioned above.

|

Figure 1 Map of Kanha Tiger Reserve (centre) showing location of proposed roads (in inset) in relation to Critical Tiger Habitat (CTH, bright green); areas included in Kanha National Park, but excluded from CTH (pale green); and buffer zone of the Tiger Reserve (light brown). Numbers in insets refer to the serial under which they are listed on Page 1.

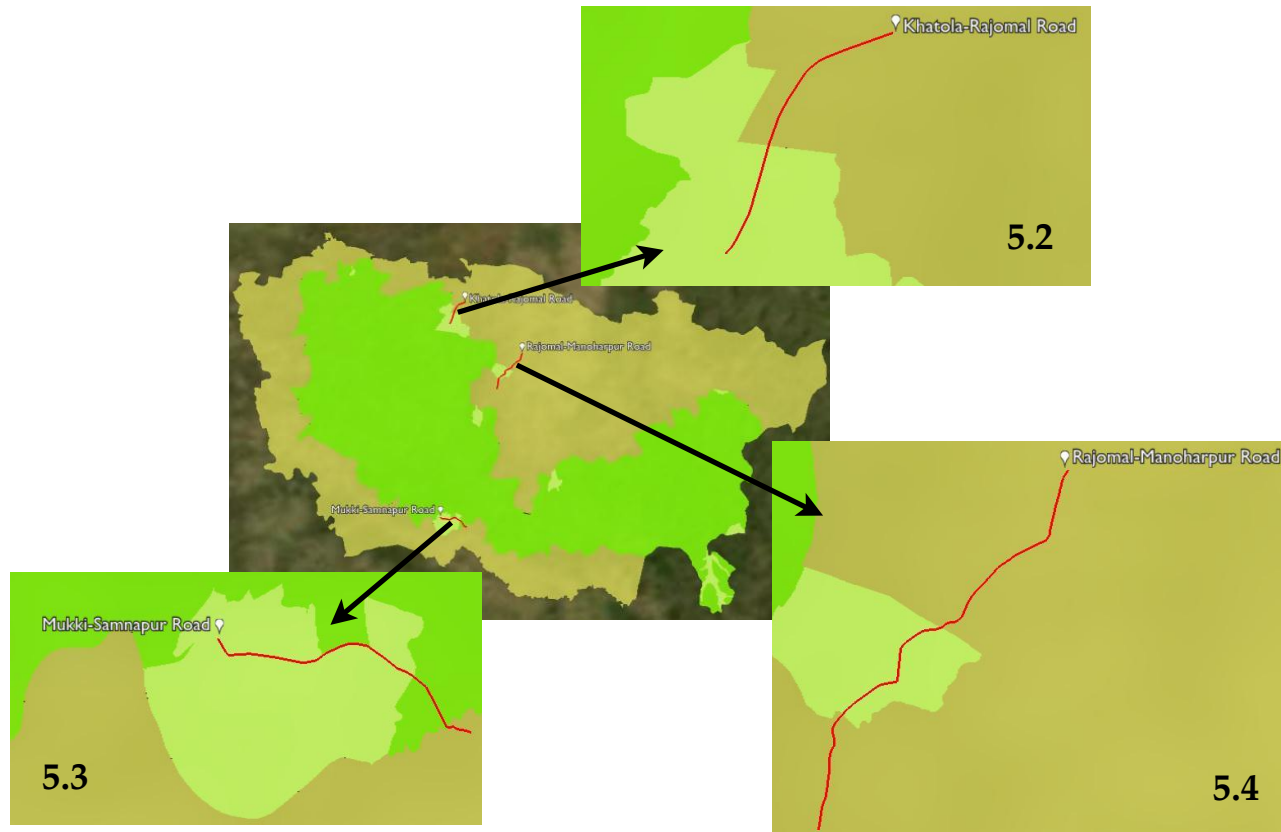
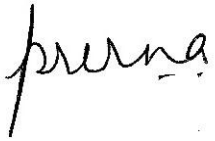


Figure 2 Map of Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary (centre) showing location of proposed roads (in inset) in relation to the sanctuary boundary (bright green) Numbers in insets refer to the serial under which roads are listed on Page 1.

Also, attached along with the report are the lists of roads given to us both by the MoEF, and the DFO(Nauradehi)



Ms Prerna Singh Bindra
Member, Standing Committee, National Board for Wildlife

Also on behalf of:

Mr Sanjay Pathak
Assistant Inspector General of Forests, National Tiger Conservation Authority

Dr M D Madhusudan
Nature Conservation Foundation, Member, Standing Committee, National Board for Wildlife

24th June 2013

